Ferries on the Salish Sea: Prototypical Interiors
Interior Design Studio 484/584
Instructor, Linda Zimmer

This studio involves a required weekend fieldtrip to Seattle and Environs April 4-6. Student Travel will be subsidized through Finrow Design Studio Award

Description:
This studio engages students in the re-design of a Washington State ferry including circulation, passenger areas, and amenities (such as food and retail) and asks students to enhance the experience of boarding, riding and disembarking through design. Students will be challenged to connect the user experience with the rich natural environment, history, and culture that are the context of these short voyages on the Salish Sea.

The Washington State Ferry System is the largest passenger ferry system in the United States. It operates ten routes, that are served by twenty terminals and twenty-two vessels provide service on an ongoing basis. The system commissions boats in eight classes. Each class is constructed from a prototype and the ferries on a given route generally belong to the same class. Likewise the interior fitting out elements tend to be based on a prototype. The galleys have a similar design from boat to boat, as do the various seating areas, the companionways and the bathrooms. However, the varied routes and passenger demographics present design challenges and will force students to design with flexibility in mind. Each route is distinct in ridership and circumstance. For instance, the San Juan Ferries are excursion boats. They carry more walk-on passengers and tourists. In contrast, the Bainbridge Island route primarily serves commuters. Daily passenger routines and activities are very different.

Students will propose new prototypical design solutions for a selected class of ferry. On the field trip we will be visiting and working with the Naval Architect for the WSF system, exploring routes and destination, riding ferries and examining user needs.

Special Objectives:
Place-making: How does the Marine Environment and the Region inform design
Wayfinding: Legibility and Imagability of interior elements and safety aboard
Public Space Design: Waiting, watching, walking… designing n for existing behavior, and encourage good behavior.
Branding/Merchandising: Unified image for ferries vs. unique experiences
Color and Light: Day vs. Night seasonal and atmospheric conditions all come into play

photo credit: Peter Keyes